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MIDSUMMER IN
WHITTIER'S COUNTRY

ETHEL ARMES

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The very pleasant friend
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**MIDSUMMER IN
WHITTIER'S COUNTRY**

MIDSUMMER IN
WHITTIER'S COUNTRY

A LITTLE STUDY OF
SANDWICH CENTER

BY
ETHEL ARMES

Author of
*The Story of Coal and Iron
in Alabama*



WITH THE AUTHOR'S
OWN SKETCHES

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TO
MY COMRADES OF THE HILLS
ALICE WIGGIN
AND
H. P. J.

10/25/42
10/25/42
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*“ It is as if the pine trees called me
From ceiled room and silent books,
To see the dance of woodland shadows,
And hear the song of April brooks ! ”*



FOREWORD



HIS little study of Sandwich Center, tells quite simply the brief and almost uneventful annals of the town from its waking in the reign of George III, throughout its term of active service in behalf of the Colonies, to its sleeping time to-day. It also gives quick glimpses of a few of the little people and places of delight in and around the village, and relates the Indian legends and traditions told round and about there: the myths of Ossipee, of Lake Asquam and Mount Chocorua.

Lines of Whittier's verse run throughout the pages, for they are as much a part of the New Hampshire country as the White Hills themselves, and sweet and full of tenderness. John Greenleaf Whittier saw, indeed, vision

of the Spirit of Poetry standing with white and delicate hands at the gateway of the mountains, and heard speech of the ancient Indian world.

Inasmuch as it was given to him — so kind and gentle of heart — to impart to succeeding generations this voice that he heard, so he has done. If he might not be Keats for the praying, at least he has drunk of fountains of his own country, and it is becoming more and more clear to those intimate with the White Mountain land, that Whittier has spoken true. “I lean my heart against the day!” he sings, and, in verse all too little read, breath of which is given in these pages, he tells of those things daily about him and much loved by him. *Among the Hills, Telling the Bees, The Vanishers, Voyage of the Jettie, Bridal of Pennacook, The Common Question, Mountain Pictures, Mogg Megone, The Lakeside, The Hill-Top, Funeral Tree of the Sokokis,* — all these belong as much, indeed, as does *Snowbound*, to New England life and letters.

The tiny sketches given here were done

out under the open sky on the hill-tops, in apple orchards by winding roads and in long grasses of the fields, so that in those places where the student's touch has failed, artist charm may be dreamed into them by whosoever knows these sweet mountain meadows that were the Quaker poet's golden fields; and likewise, it is prayed, into the book.

ETHEL ARMES.

Birmingham, Alabama.







I.

FROM THE LITTLE PATH ON THE APPLE HILL

*"I would I were a painter for the
sake of a sweet picture."*



NOT far up along the road to Ossipee, just a quarter of a mile beyond the village, there is a little hill where rocks and apples grow. A stone wall, put up in the time of George III, shuts out a mischievous tangle of blackberry briars, and helps support the heavily burdened arms of one of the oldest of the trees, some of whose rosy apples hang right over a tiny gate going into the hill. A few other apples have tumbled down among tall grasses, which flirt in the wind with dashing groups of black-eyed

daisies—there, in the very face of the little path—and such a tattle-tale of a path! Off it runs to each one of the ancient apple trees, winks naughtily in the shadows, then hides in the spears of the redtop grass, away from the listening leaves. Pretty soon, shaking itself free from the field flowers and the long reaches of the circling trees, it climbs up the steep side of the hill, shudders by some big savage rocks that stretch out like an ogre's arms to grab it, and then—suddenly—before it is aware, is way up high on the tiptop of the little hill, all by itself, looking out upon the whole wide world alone!

* * * * *

Through Sandwich Notch the west-wind sang
Good morrow to the cotter;
And once again Chocorua's horn
Of shadow pierced the water.

Above his broad lake Ossipee,
Once more the sunshine wearing,
Stooped, tracing on that silver shield
His grim armorial bearing.

— From *Among the Hills*.

From this little path on the Apple Hill, the small white houses of the village appear like snow flakes. Some of them reach out

in long, glistening lines,—they are white apron strings trying to hold back the runaway roads, for the little village is the mother-place of an hundred highland roads, those truant chieftains of the New Hampshire Hills. Miles and miles through the purple mountains, by the white lake shores, they wind,—under gleaming birch belts, by dusky maple groves, along deep intervalles where the elms and willows droop, and where sing the sirens of the pines. Sometimes they stop for breath in the lowlands where the sun burns hot, and, out of sight of their mother's eyes, they make golden love to the flowers there. Graceful forms of ferns lean over them; fragrant elder bushes hurry forth their rare white lacework; fading tones of the flowers of milkweed and iron-rust cast their glances as falling eye-lashes; pale celandine trails her bridal veil before them—daisies, buttercups, rich golden-rod—all the maiden flowers of midsummer time, tiptoe close to the enchanters—with no modesty whatever! But on go the flying chieftains, ferns and flowers clinging to their kilts! They round stone walls and fences made of roots of giant old pines, hurry by deserted

farms and abandoned mills, up and down, over streams, by long lanes and bridle paths; on and on, rising and falling, past cornfields and orchards in the sky, until, like the little path on the road to Ossipee, they climb right up into the clouds, and are lost forevermore!

The only sound from the village is a tinkle of cow-bells in the rock pasture near the school house; for even in midsummer, with all the strangers here, Sandwich Center is quiet as a snow-fall. Tall spires of the little white churches, gray shingled roofs, red brick chimneys and green blinds of the snowy houses, their snug barns and wood shelters, wells, orchards, and herb gardens framed by the stone walls, curve in and out of the trees in a play of fresh, bright color.

There is the house, with the gate red-barred,
And the poplars tall;
And the barn's brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.

There are the beehives ranged in the sun;
And down by the brink
Of the brook are her poor flowers, weed o'errun,
Pansy and daffodil, rose and pink.

—From *Telling the Bees*.

The roads are silent as forest trails. Across from the postoffice is Dorr's hotel with its wide sheltered porches. Down the road a piece is Maybelle's house and the little white home of the twins, Ruth and Dorris, the minister's children. Marston's and Dr. White's are further on, and then beyond four willow trees is the house where Mildred lives. The new school is but a stone's throw off. The old school was yonder down by Little Pond, there where Master Ladd, the lame teacher, taught for forty years. Mildred's father and her uncle used to draw him to school every day in a sled, and sometimes the other pupils helped. Near the store on Main street is Maybelle's favorite haunt, the shop of the harness-maker and clock-mender. At the point of the road near the Spokesfield Pines is the Burleigh House, the old Sandwich Inn, and farther up, Diamond Ledge House and Miss Foster's, going by Perry's studio on the way.

In the other direction towards Four Corners, the old blacksmith shop and the saw-mill are passed on the right, then the marsh, and Wentworth's Pines and the lonely cabin of the strange old man of Sandwich, on the

left, while at the very top of the hill are the Wentworth manor house and Adam's place where a massive stone wall extends for miles like some old Roman fortification.

All through this region of North country the call of the Indian is mingled with the voice of England's reign. Side by side on the guiding stones, with the musical Indian names, run the quaint letters of Tamworth Town, North Conway, Meredith, Sandwich, South Chatham and Moultonboro.

The valley where Sandwich Center sleeps is encircled by the hills as by a vast jeweled coronet of ever-changing colors, purple and rose and red and gold—Israel, Black Mountain, Sandwich Dome, Red Hill, Ossipee, White-Face, Paugus, Passaconaway, Wonnalancet, and, stirring in the distance, the horn of Mount Chocorua. Mightier ranges tower to the north, but none is more strange or beautiful than the mystic Sandwich range, guardian of Asquam and Winnepesaukee—Smile of the Great Spirit—of Bearcamp water and Lake Chocorua. Here was the beloved ground of Whittier—here, where Indian legends float in the breezes. And when the little mists rise over the mountains,

all the people say, "Look! the ghosts of the Indians are abroad this morning on Ossipee!" or "See,—they are smoking the pipe of peace on Israel!"

Sweetest of all childlike dreams
In the simple Indian lore,
Still to me the legend seems
Of the shapes who flit before.

Flitting, passing, seen and gone,
Never reached nor found at rest,
Baffling search, but beckoning on
To the Sunset of the Blest.

From the clefts of mountain rocks,
Through the dark of lowland firs,
Flash the eyes and flow the locks
Of the mystic Vanishers!

And the fisher in his skiff,
And the hunter on the moss,
Hear their call from cape and cliff,
See their hands the birch-leaves toss.

Wistful, longing, through the green
Twilight of the clustered pines,
In their faces rarely seen
Beauty more than mortal shines.

Fringed with gold their mantles flow
On the slopes of westering knolls;
In the wind they whisper low
Of the Sunset Land of Souls.

—From *The Vanishers*.





II.

IN THE RED SUNSET, CARAVANS OF THE OLD DAYS PASS



HE Center's days of business and bustle have long since gone. It basks in the sun now, and is content to try no more climbing of mountains. Sometimes it dreams. In the red sunset, caravans of the old days pass. Down through Sandwich Notch come the endless line of red sleds, drawn by oxen and burdened with lumber for the building of the colonial settlements, or laden with pines for the royal navy. In those years, the New Hampshire white pines were stalwart trees standing high two hundred and fifty feet or more, and there grew not one in all that Sandwich region that was not destined to mast the royal navy, and branded with the

broad arrow by order of the king. For a settler to cut one down was, under British law, a felony and punishable by a fine of one hundred pounds.

In that time the only roads through the valley were these old lumber trails and the trails of the Indian, the moose, the bear and deer. Prospectors surveyed Sandwich valley nearly two centuries ago and built the first cabins of the village on the wooded banks of Little Pond, near Lower Corner. The town was granted by Colonial Governor Wentworth in 1763. Two years later, according to the old Sandwich records, Orlando Weed was granted, by vote of the proprietors at Exeter, seven hundred acres, seventy pounds of lawful money and seven cows, on condition that he would settle seven families in Sandwich, and build seven substantial dwelling houses, and clear forty acres of land within three years.

The Wentworths erected their stately home with columned portico and solid walls, the old capitol of Sandwich—still standing on Wentworth Hill:

Still green about its ample porch
The English ivy twines,

Trained back to show in English oak
The herald's carven signs.

A number of other families, celebrated in early New England history, settled in the growing township; among them, the French, Sherman and White families, the last allied to the house of Oliver Cromwell. Peregrine White, the father of Dr. White who settled in Sandwich in that early period, was the first child born in New England.

Many of the survivors of the French and Indian war, men of the 4th New Hampshire regiment, migrated to the new township. With Spartan law and Spartan courage the daring little maiden town of the wild hills was builded to a youth of activity and strength. During the Revolution she sent forth her sons to battle, gave them their shields—"return thou with them or upon them"—and they returned with them. In the records of the battle of Bunker Hill a Sandwich regiment is honorably mentioned. Meanwhile a marriage with a Quaker husband brought forth new elements of thrift and industry. Iron foundries, brick kilns, sawmills and gristmills were established, and shoes and clothing manufactured for all the

country round. The Sandwich cattle, Denmark breed, became noted in growing New England, and there were no better farms in all the thirteen states combined. Thus the golden age of the village came, lasted for fifty years—and went.

With the outbreak of the civil war, again the martial clamor, the giving of the shields, and the Spartan admonition. This time the young men came back upon their shields, and the mother village bowed, never to look up again. Little by little an alien element crept in and took possession of the farms whose younger masters had either been killed or had abandoned them for the West. At the present time not more than five families, descendants of the colonial settlers, remain in Sandwich.

The village is awake to things only during the summer months, and here gather from all the world the dreaming of lovers of the White Hills.

A shallow stream, from fountains
Deep in the Sandwich mountains,
Ran lakeward Bearcamp River;
And between its flood-torn shores,
Sped by sail or urged by oars
No keel had vexed it ever.

Alone the dead trees yielding
To the dull axe Time is wielding,
 The shy mink and the otter,
And golden leaves and red,
By countless autumns shed,
 Had floated down its water.

From the gray rocks of Cape Ann,
Came a skilled seafaring man,
 With his dory, to the right place;
Over hill and plain he brought her,
Where the boatless Bearcamp water
 Comes winding down from White-Face.

* * * * * *

On, where the stream flows quiet
As the meadows' margins by it,
 Or widens out to borrow a
New life from that wild water,
The mountain giant's daughter,
 The pine-besung Chocorua.

Or, mid the tangling cumber
And pack of mountain lumber
 That spring floods downward force,
Over sunken snag, and bar
Where the grating shallows are,
 The good boat held her course.

* * * * * *

So, to where the still lake glasses
The misty mountain masses
 Rising dim and distant northward,
And, with faint-drawn shadow pictures,
Low shores and dead pine spectres,
 Blends the skyward and the earthward.

On she glided, overladen,
 With merry man and maiden
 Sending back their song and laughter,—
 While, perchance, a phantom crew,
 In a ghostly birch canoe,
 Paddled dumb and swiftly after!

And the bear on Ossipee
 Climbed the topmost crag to see
 The strange thing drifting under;
 And, through the haze of August,
 Passaconaway and Paugus
 Looked down in sleepy wonder.

All the pines that o'er her hung
 In mimic sea-tones sung
 The song familiar to her;
 And the maples leaned to screen her,
 And the meadow-grass seemed greener,
 And the breeze more soft to woo her.

* * * * *

Of these hills the little vessel
 Henceforth is part and parcel;
 And on Bearcamp shall her log
 Be kept, as if by George's
 Or Grand Menân, the surges
 Tossed her skipper through the fog.

And I, who, half in sadness
 Recall the morning gladness
 Of life, at evening time,
 By chance, onlooking idly,
 Apart from all so widely,
 Have set her voyage to rhyme.

—From *Voyage of the Jettie*.

NOTE.—The picturesquely situated Wayside Inn at West Ossipee, N. H., is now in ashes; and to its former guests these somewhat careless rhymes may be a not unwelcome reminder of pleasant summers and autumns on the banks of the Bearcamp and Chocorua. To the author himself they have a special interest from the fact that they were written, or improvised, under the eye, and for the amusement of a beloved invalid friend whose last earthly sunsets faded from the mountain ranges of Ossipee and Sandwich.—From *Poetical Works of John Greenleaf Whittier*. Riverside Press. 1888.







III.

THE LITTLE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE

*"A music as of household songs
Was in her voice of sweetness."*



MILDRED loves the little apple hill on the road to Ossipee. She is not afraid to go there alone because there are not any witches there, like those in the old float dam. There are fairies instead, and all the things for the fairies.

"Look! This is their brown bread all ready for them,—only it got burned in the oven," Mildred will say, taking up a black-eyed daisy, "and oh,—this buttercup,—this is their pretty little butter dish full of butter!" Then she will gather her apron

full of grasses and field flowers and bring them to one of her summer ladies under the apple trees. Mildred is a little field flower herself, with her blue eyes and her light hair and her slight, frail little body. She is seven years old,—“But I’m going to be eight,—my mother says it!” she cries. Because her father drives the stage to Center Harbor she is very proud, and catches her breath whenever the lumbering old coach goes by full of the summer folk. When Maybelle is mad with her she turns up her nose and says she need not think she is so much, for a tinner is much better than a stage-driver. Maybelle’s father is the tinner and she is proud of that, but when Charlotte, the twins’ big sister, breaks in with, “A minister is better than any,” the children have not a word to say, for Charlotte’s father is the minister.

Maybelle often wears boy’s blue overalls and drives an old gray mare, hitched to a red hay rake, out into the fields and works like a farmer until sundown. She is as different from Mildred and Dorris as high noon from dawn. Her face is like a rosy apple. She is sturdily built and proud of her muscle and

her long golden-brown hair which she wears in two thick braids. Sometimes she takes Mildred out to the fields and lets her ride on the old gray mare. They both talk of the summer ladies then. Oh! the ladies who come in the summer time! Some of them have pink ribbons and white dresses full of beautiful lace, and embroidery on their petticoats. Once, one of them named Miss Florence, had six gold rings—and she gave Mildred one of them! That lady came from Boston. Mildred herself was there once. “That is a city,” she says, “children cannot play in the roads there. I have seen make-believe people there;—I saw them in the store windows. It was there I saw Santa Claus. He was going down a chimney in Boston. Oh, do you know, there is one woman says Santa Claus isn’t so! She is Mrs. Hinson,—she says it!”

One morning, quite early, Mildred ran out of her house as the summer ladies passed going up to the apple hill: “Oh,—did you see the Gipsies go by this morning? Oh—oh—six waggings of them! But they didn’t get me! I ran! Oncet they got Tom Clark an’ he bawled fer his mother so they

took him out an' strapped him to a tree an' Indianed him an' left him there!" (To Indian anyone in Sandwich is to black his face and hands.)

Often at evening, sitting out on the school-house rocks Mildred chatters away like a little sparrow: "I get up in the morning at seven o'clock, I pick up the dishes, then I strip the beds an' make them, then I wash the dishes an' water the hens. Then I swing in the swinging chair with baby. In the afternoon I play. I go to Hester's or I play with Maybelle or the twins. We play mothers. I have six dolls an' a lounge bed an' a cradle. Then every night I lock the wood-house door. If my mamma should say to me, 'Mildred, you do not have to do your chores to-day,'—I would do them just the same,—they help Papa. Oh, yesterday I went to Meredith,—I did! That is the place where I was born. It is a little farm. We have,—oh, a lot of hay an' a big large pasture, an' we let other horses come in,—we do."

Once Miss Florence said to Mildred: "I know such a dear little girl. She lives in a house near me, and I think she is the best of all."

“Oh,—I know!” cried Mildred, “that is me.”

The hills are dearest which our childish feet
Have climbed the earliest; and the streams most sweet
Are ever those at which our young lips drank
Stooped to their waters o'er the grassy bank.

Midst the cold dreary sea-watch, Home's heart-light
Shines round the helmsman plunging through the
 night;
And still, with inward eye, the traveller sees
In close, dark, stranger streets his native trees.

The home-sick dreamer's brow is nightly fanned
By breezes whispering of his native land,
And on the stranger's dim and dying eye
The soft, sweet pictures of his childhood lie.

—From *Bridal of Pennacook*.

* * *

“In thy large heart were fair guest chambers open to sunrise and to birds.”

Dorris looks at you,—so—her deep eyes clear as the waters of a mountain spring. She puts her tiny little white hand tenderly in yours, if she loves you, and walks beside you in the evening wherever you go, without question and without chatter, silently and superbly as a star. She always takes Ruth

by the hand also and if Marston's dog or George Smith's red cow comes along the road, Dorris will stand in front of Ruth to protect her. Sometimes the little ones,—and they are only just five years old,—will come hand in hand to a fence that encloses summer boarders and look in by the hour. Once Ruth and Dorris got lost in the old mill pasture. That is a lonely place at all times,—most gray and dismal,—and to be lost there is terrible. They were looking for thoroughwort for Miss Mary Jane, and they got off the road little by little and under a fence and off in the hazel bushes before they knew it. Then they were lost. All at once, a big gray building, hollow as a hollow tree, all full of cracks and vines and spider webs, came up out of the ground. It was the haunted old grist mill, left alone even when their own mother was young. Stones were piled up in the old pasture as though it were a grave-yard. One tree lay dead on the ground. Five mullein stalks, tall as Ruth herself, grew on the rock mounds. A gray cloud had fallen over the place long ago and never lifted. But over the broken fence was a bright green bed of brake.

Then a bell broke the stillness and pretty soon it came nearer and nearer and a pair of terrible, long, sharp horns tossed over the brake. It was Smith's red cow! Dorris made Ruth lie down behind the stones and she knelt in front of her. There was no way to ever get out any more. "Cow do not come! Cow do not come!" Dorris prayed, holding her hands over Ruth. The bushes parted by the dry mill run. Dorris closed her eyes but she did not move. And—it was not the cow—it was a lady, one of Dorris's own summer ladies with paints and a picture.

"I will not let the cow hurt Ruth, my little Dorris," she said, "she is really a good cow and she does not want to hook anybody. She only wants to find something to eat for herself,—but we will go down this way across the branch. It is not far to your home." Then the lady lifted them over the Red Hill stream, and they were in Adams' wheat field right off and on the side of the road! And the cow did not get them at all. She just kept on eating.

* * * * *

"Bring us the airs of hills and forests,
The sweet aroma of birch and pine;

Give us a waft of the north-wind laden
With sweetbrier odors and breath of kine!

“Bring us the purple of mountain sunsets,
Shadows of clouds that rake the hills,
The green repose of thy Plymouth meadows,
The gleam and ripple of Campton rills.

“Lead us away in shadow and sunshine,
Slaves of fancy, through all thy miles,
The winding ways of Pemigewasset,
And Winnepesaukee's hundred isles.

“Shatter in sunshine over thy ledges,
Laugh in thy plunges from fall to fall;
Play with thy fringes of elms, and darken
Under the shade of the mountain wall.

“The cradle-song of thy hillside fountains
Here in thy glory and strength repeat;
Give us a taste of thy upland music,
Show us the dance of thy silver feet.”

* * *

“ *The sodden forest floors
With golden lights were checkered.*”

The way to the old float dam begins not far from Mildred's house, just back of Dr. White's cornfield. After leaving the cornfield and jumping a fence, there is a little space of quiet meadow, crescent shaped, half

hidden by the trees and full of fair light grasses and sunlit daisies. The pines withdraw their dark shadows far back. The gleaming branches of a solitary white birch form an arc of light just over the entrance into the mysterious wood, the beginning of the long trail. A log fallen over the marshy place, just here, makes a bridge to higher ground. Then but a little while, and the heart of the pines beats fast. Their breath falls sweetly, and the ground underfoot is golden-brown and soft with spears of the pines, piled there deep as snow in the long winter. Only a few glances of the sky pierce the deep rich green. Far darkening hollows roll down from the trail off into the maze of aisles and tree columns,—blue crypts of the ancient cathedral. In many places, tiny mushrooms gleam like pearls and opals dropped by ghostly queens of long ago. Indian pipes, cold in color as old marble, lift their slender shafts out of the gloom,—mist arises,—the smoke of yesterday's seven thousand years. So, through the way of dreams, passes the trail. Then it stops. A noisome, brackish stream lies across it like a snake crushed by a broken wall of cyclopean rocks, and all be-

yond is bog and mire and swamp bound in
by the everlasting pines. Out of the poison-
ous marsh springs some strange wild flower,
red as blood.

* * *

*"The valley holds its breath. . . .
No leaf of all its elms is twirled."*

A gray, shaggy boulder high on the ridge
of a hill,—one apple tree leaning near,—
that is Sunset Rock, the nearest point to the
village where a view of all the mighty ranges
may be had in one grand sweep.

One summer a solitary stranger, some
sweet-natured Thoreau, came to Sandwich
and pitched his tent in the shadow of this
rock. For two weeks he camped there
speaking to no man, given over to the silent
watch of the great hills.

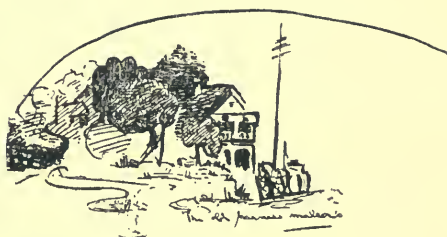
Another summer a young girl who sang,
often stood upon the rocks. Alone in the
twilight there, her blue dress like a bit of the
dawn sky, and with arms outstretched to the
glowing hills, she would sing the love-songs
of the masters—yearning of the ages . . . in
sæcula sæculorum.

* * * * *

Once more, O Mountains of the North, unveil
Your brows, and lay your cloudy mantles by!
And once more, ere the eyes that seek ye fail,
Uplift against the blue walls of the sky
Your mighty shapes, and let the sunshine weave
Its golden net-work in your belting woods,
Smile down in rainbows from your falling floods,
And on your kingly brows at morn and eve
Set crowns of fire! So shall my soul receive
Haply the secret of your calm and strength,
Your unforgotten beauty interfuse
My common life, your glorious shapes and hues
And sun-dropped splendors at my bidding come,
Loom vast through dreams, and stretch in billowy
length
From the sea-level of my lowland home!

They rise before me! Last night's thunder-gust
Roared not in vain: for where its lightnings thrust
Their tongues of fire, the great peaks seem so near,
Burned clean of mist, so starkly bold and clear,
I almost pause the wind in the pines to hear,
The loose rock's fall, the steps of browsing deer.
The clouds that shattered on yon slide-worn walls
And splintered on the rocks their spears of rain
Have set in play a thousand waterfalls,
Making the dusk and silence of the woods
Glad with the laughter of the chasing floods,
And luminous with blown spray and silver gleams,
While, in the vales below, the dry-lipped streams
Sing to the freshened meadow-lands again.

—From *Mountain Pictures*.





IV.

“I LEAN MY HEART AGAINST THE DAY”

*“I read each misty mountain sign,
I know the voice of wave and pine,
And I am yours and ye are mine.”*



JOURNAL of the days runs all to clouds: rich purple twilight, a mystery of red, the sad, fading red that glows and burns against the mountains, and lasts till all the other sky has grown dark and full of stars. . . . Cloud shadows over the valley, rain on Sandwich Dome—white mist veiling it—low rain clouds breaking over it—the rain slanting down—and—coming—coming . . . A clear, valiant blue sky, billows of snow white clouds rolling over all the hills—but over Ossipee—little purple mists like

violets blowing. . . . Vast domes and palaces of clouds floating over the mountains at sunset—gold wings arising in the twilight—long streamers of color,—lavender, rose pink, old gold, edging the hills,—then again that rich, warm red, beating like a great full heart—burning into the night far behind the hills. . . . 'To-day, tenderness and sweetness in the far, far light blue—dear with baby clouds. . . . On Burleigh Hill,—a mighty black cloud brooding over the sky,—but toward the hills, light and white, the far distance, soft with mists. . . . Savage clouds suddenly gathering,—rolling dark and gray—casting shadows of war—through them tiny little maiden skies trembling—white veils hiding their sweet blue forms—torn in streaks by the fierce thunder-heads leaping hard upon them—ravishing them with a fearful delight.

“From ceilèd rooms, from silent books,
From crowded car and town,
Dear Mother Earth, upon thy lap
We lay our tired heads down.”

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V.

A DIARY OF THE HARVEST MONTH

*"I climbed a hill path strange and new
With slow feet pausing at each turn,—
A sudden waft of west wind blew
The breath of the sweet fern."*

—[August the 1st.



HITE-FACE to-day! We left in the dim, cool mist just before dawn. There were only four pale stars in the sky, and these we soon lost in the shadow of Israel. Long interminable veils of mist hid the other ranges and covered the valley. "There's rain on White-Face," said our guide. But far over eastward bloomed a gentle flush of rose color—so we drove on. It was to be one

of the sun's blue days, however. He tried to be glorious,—but Aurora and her maidens must have been weeping—so he was all upset. He came out and went back several times, then finally he stayed with the tearful maidens. Thus the mist was in nowise lifted when we reached the wonderful interval at the foot of the slide-scarred mountain. After putting up our teams in the big barn of a comfortable farmhouse, there, we found the trail, pressed through the thick growth of wet hazel bushes, and after shaping alpen stocks, we began the ascent. There were two other girls besides Alice and myself in the party. They were from Concord—disciples of Thoreau,—and they paused with a quiet pleasure before every little faintly sketched flower, and mountain plant along the misty trail. Two superb, active hours, mounting up through the pines, struggling under fallen trees, scaling big bowlders, going higher and higher in the fast-gathering mist, singing old English ballads: “Now gayly thro’ the mountain glen, the hunter winds his horn!”—then all at once, shut in by the cloud—hurriedly gathering pine boughs for a tent and stripping the giant birches for ponchos

and umbrellas—building a fire—watching the smoke crawl around our shivering fingers—then suddenly all the skies opening and a wild mad flood pouring down—a gallop to earth again—back to the clean farm kitchen, a warm fire and good hot coffee.

We had been wandering for many days
Through the rough northern country. We had seen
The sunset, with its bars of purple cloud,
Like a new heaven, shine upward from the lake
Of Winnepiseogee; and had felt
The sunrise breezes, midst the leafy isles
Which stoop their summer beauty to the lips
Of the bright waters. We had checked our steeds,
Silent with wonder, where the mountain wall
Is piled to heaven; and, through the narrow rift
Of the vast rocks, against whose rugged feet
Beats the mad torrent with perpetual roar,
Where noonday is as twilight, and the wind
Comes burdened with the everlasting moan
Of forests and of far-off waterfalls,
We had looked upward where the summer sky,
Tasselled with clouds light-woven by the sun,
Sprung its blue arch above the abutting crags
O'er-roofing the vast portal of the land
Beyond the wall of mountains. We had passed
The high source of the Saco; and bewildered
In the dwarf spruce-belts of the Crystal Hills
Had heard above us, like a voice in the cloud
The horn of Fabyan sounding; and atop
Of old Agioochook had seen the mountains

Piled to the northward, shagged with wood, and thick
 As meadow mole-hills,—the far sea of Casco,
 A white gleam on the horizon of the east;
 Fair lakes, embosomed in the woods and hills;
 Moosehillock's mountain range, and Kearsarge
 Lifting his Titan forehead to the sun!

And we had rested underneath the oaks
 Shadowing the bank, whose grassy spires are shaken
 By the perpetual beating of the falls
 Of the wild Ammonoosuc. We had tracked
 The winding Pemigewasset, overhung
 By beechen shadows, whitening down its rocks,
 Or lazily gliding through its intervals,
 From waving rye-fields sending up the gleam
 Of sunlit waters. We had seen the moon
 Rising behind Umbagog's eastern pines,
 Like a great Indian camp-fire; and its beams
 At midnight spanning with a bridge of silver
 The Merrimac by Uncanoonuc's falls.

—From *The Bridal of Pennacook*.

* * *

*“Through each branch-enwoven skylight
 Speaks He in the breeze,
 As of old beneath the twilight
 Of lost Eden's trees!”*

—[August the 6th.

Last night I ran off secretly to the Spokes-
 field Pines. I tiptoed away from the house
 while everyone was sound asleep, just as the

late moon was coming up over the hills. I hurried along the white road by the silent houses. Marstan's dog barked furiously at me, but no one woke up and I came safely to the last house of the village. This was beyond the old Burleigh Inn, and a light was in one of the front rooms. Old Susan Willey was still sewing carpet rags! My heart trembled as I left the light. I felt as though I were about to enter into some terrible but sweet adventure,—some divine rendezvous! After vaulting the fence just beyond the old pump I struck the trail, and in another moment was shrouded in the darkness of the pines. Shadows have such a fearful delight. I lay in them until I was too frightened to get up. There was a strange shape in front of me that seemed to move. After a long while—it seemed hours—I thrust out my hands,—and touched—a blackberry briar swaying in the wind over an old stump. I drew closer and I saw it was the very stump whose rings we had counted last Wednesday. The tree had but recently fallen. Dr. Wiggin used a magnifying glass to get the records and we found that it was five hundred years old. In certain parts of the Spokesfield

woods the pines are grouped in curiously harmonious lines. As things became more distinct I could follow this fine grouping and the fantastic play of the light.

* * * * *

Hark!—is that the angry howl
 Of the wolf, the hills among?—
 Or the hooting of the owl,
 On his leafy cradle swung?—
 Quickly glancing, to and fro,
 Listening to each sound they go
 Round the columns of the pine,
 Indistinct, in shadow, seeming
 Like some old and pillared shrine;
 With the soft and white moonshine,
 Round the foliage-tracery shed
 Of each column's branching head,
 For its lamps of worship gleaming!
 And the sounds awakened there,
 In the pine-leaves fine and small,
 Soft and sweetly musical,
 By the fingers of the air,
 For the anthem's dying fall
 Lingering round some temple's wall!
 Niche and cornice round and round
 Wailing like the ghost of sound!

—From *Mogg Megone*.

I stretched myself out full length on the pine needles and breathed in the cool freshness and looked up long through the pine

boughs. I wished for more stars. I thought of a girl I had met once five years before, from far up in Duluth, one who had slept in the pines along the great lake shore, who had spoken to me of the large stars before dawn, of the song of the pines and the breath of the pines. I saw her walking in the shadows with her pale face upturned, and I knew now, at last, how she had felt in the pines.

I counted the sounds I heard. A cock crew way off somewhere. A dog barked, an owl hooted and a sleepless squirrel dropped an acorn at my feet. It made such a loud noise I jumped. Then I lay quiet again. I marked the swift changes of the moonlight on the black trunks of the pines and in their lofty boughs, the fast traveling and checkered glow on the soft, clean ground and the long mellow sweeps of light.

Then I wrapped my coat tightly about me and slept long in the song of the pines.

* * *

*"All through the long bright days of June
Its leaves grew green and fair
And waved in hot midsummer noon
Its soft and yellow hair."*

—[August the 10th.

On Rock Maple Ridge to-day
“First, a lake, tinted with sunset; next the
waving lines of far receding hills,”
the might and majesty of Israel,—then all at
once a glory of golden wheat on the very
crest of the steep hill, waving like hair in the
wind, shining like hair in the sun—a wonder
past the telling. One dwarf-like old
man, wrinkled and long bearded, bent double
over his scythe,—Hagen stealing the gold
from the Rhine maidens.

* * *

*“Somewhere it laughed and sang; somewhere
Whirled in mad dance its misty hair,
But who had raised its veil, or seen
The rainbow skirts of that Undine?”*

—[August the 15th.

To-day we drove to Beedis' Falls,—the
wonder road through Sandwich Notch:

“The river hemmed with leaning trees
Wound through its meadows green;
A long blue line of mountains showed
The open pines between.

“One sharp, tall peak above them all
Clear into sunlight sprang,
I saw the river of my dreams,
The mountains that I sang.”

At the place where we stopped first the water flowed quietly over a great wide sweep of solid rock. Wading was slippery but full of delight. I dropped all my petticoats and letting fly my hair I leaped, feeling like a deer, down over to the smaller rocks where the water began to tumble and I could be drenched in its tossing spray. Flashes of the sunlight warmed my wet legs and arms, and I danced every wild step I knew,—feeling so free and glorious:

“The leaves through which the glad winds blew
Shared the wild dance the waters knew;
And where the shadows deepest fell,
The wood-thrush rang his silver bell.

“Fringing the stream at every turn,
Swung low the waving fronds of fern;
From stony clefts and mossy sod,
Pale asters sprang, and golden-rod.

“The turquoise lakes, the glimpse of pond
And river track, and, vast, beyond
Broad meadows belted round with pines
The grand uplift of mountain lines!”

* * * * *

Against the wooded hills it stands,
Ghosts of a dead home, staring through
Its broken lights on wasted lands
Where old-time harvests grew.

Unploughed, unsown, by scythe unshorn,
The poor, forsaken farm-fields lie,
Once rich and rife with golden corn
And pale green breadths of rye.

Of healthful herb and flower bereft,
The garden plot no housewife keeps;
Through weeds and tangle only left,
The snake, its tenant, creeps.

A lilac spray, still blossom-clad,
Sways slow before the empty rooms;
Beside the roofless porch a sad
Pathetic red rose blooms.

His track, in mould and dust of drouth,
On floor and hearth the squirrel leaves,
And in the fireless chimney's mouth
His web the spider weaves.

The leaning barn, about to fall,
Resounds no more on husking eves:
No cattle low in yard or stall,
No thresher beats his sheaves.

So sad, so drear! It seems almost
Some haunting Presence makes its sign;
That down yon shadowy lane some ghost
Might drive his spectral kine!

From The Homestead.

—[August the 20th.

Yesterday Alice and I drove along by Israel by way of the old stage road. We passed a dingy farm house where the old people were left alone. A quaintly fashioned letter box had been put up years before in front of their house,—when their only son went west. Every day when the stage passed they watched for a letter. Finally two robins built a nest in the little box. Every spring they came back; no letter has ever disturbed them. We came to another farm house deserted and forlorn, a haunted place, far in the fields. Israel has many such. It broods over them gloomily, but the highland roads laugh in its grave face and run carelessly by the abandoned homes of its lost children. It was warm yesterday; a drowsy sense even in those gay roads:—O, the charm of their sleep on the breasts of the maiden flowers!

“Along the roadside, like the flowers of gold
That tawny Incas for their gardens wrought,
Heavy with sunshine droops the golden-rod.
And the red pennons of the cardinal flowers
Hang motionless upon their upright staves.
The sky is hot and hazy, and the wind,

Wing-weary with its long flight from the south,
 Unfelt; yet, closely scanned yon maple leaf
 With faintest motion, as one stirs in dreams,
 Confesses it. The locust by the wall
 Stabs the noon silence with his sharp alarm.
 A single hay-cart down the dusty road
 Creaks slowly, with its driver fast asleep on the
 load's top.

* * * * *

“Against the neighboring hill,
 Huddled along the stone wall's shady side,
 The sheep snow white, as if a snowdrift,
 Defied the dog-star. Through the open door
 A drowsy smell of flowers,—gay heliotrope,
 And white sweet clover, and shy mignonette—
 Comes faintly in, and silent chorus lends
 To the pervading symphony of peace.”

So we drove and we drove, Alice and I.
 We followed the roads as the flowers did,
 we embraced them, we adored them,—and
 we did not blame a single little aster! It
 was dark when we turned homeward,—
 “How those clouds low down turn to moun-
 tains,” said Alice, “and the pastures stretch
 off smooth into space. Look,—the mist
 sweeping up from the valley over Israel. . .”
 Then we watched the stars come out. With
 half-closed eyes we watched the mystic fair-
 ness of the hills—those brides of the night-

clouds and the stars—adorning themselves for their sweet bridegrooms.

“How far and strange the mountains seem,
Dim-looking through the pale, still light;
The vague, vast grouping of a dream,
They stretch into the solemn night.”

* * *

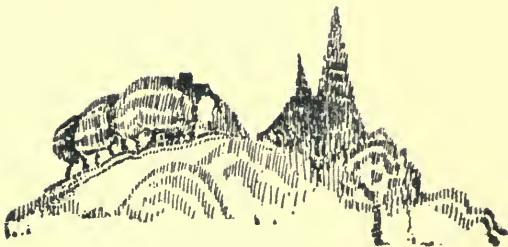
—[August the 30th.

To-day,—to-day,—all day under the apple trees! A big white cloud luminous with light arising over the sloping gray roof—all the sky a clear and serene blue—apples shining on the trees,—mellow,—full of sweet fruit-smell,—the sad leaves closing around them tenderly—holding them fast,—knowing their loss is coming. . . .

So twilight deepened round us. Still and black
The great woods climbed the mountain at our back;
And on their skirts, where yet the lingering day
On the shorn greenness of the clearing lay,
The brown old farm-house like a bird's-nest hung.
With home-life sounds the desert air was stirred:
The bleat of sheep along the hill we heard,
The bucket plashing in the cool, sweet well,
The pasture-bars that clattered as they fell;
Dogs barked, fowls fluttered, cattle lowed; the gate
Of the barn-yard creaked beneath the merry weight

Of sun-brown children, listening, while they swung,
The welcome sound of supper-call to hear;
And down the shadowy lane, in tinklings clear,
The pastoral curfew of the cow-bell rung.
Thus soothed and pleased, our backward path we took,
Praising the farmer's home. He only spake,
Looking into the sunset o'er the lake,
Like one to whom the far-off is most near:
"Yes, most folks think it has a pleasant look;
I love it for my good old mother's sake,
Who lived and died here in the peace of God!"

—From *Mountain Pictures*.





VI.

INDIAN LEGENDS FLOAT IN THE BREEZES

I. OSSIPÉE

*"Let Indian ghosts, if such there be,
Who ply unseen their shadowy lines,
Call back the ancient name to thee
As with the voice of pines!"*



ALTHOUGH Israel is mighty and much beloved, Ossipee sings to the heart with the woman's love-song. Its fair brow, gold-crowned, the rising sunlit dome, like the one burning breast of an Amazon girl,—the grace of its long, firm lines,—the sweetness of the little clouds,—its winged children—playing over it,—then the transparent blushing wonder of it when the twilight falls.

Long ago, so the stories say, an ocean of pines swept the vast hill from base to dome; the very name in the Indian tongue meant Mountain of the Pines, and it was the Indian symbol of the ideal.

The Ossipee Falls are the Falls of the Song of the Pines. Some say that late in November a plaintive note is heard here. That is the last cry of an Indian brave of the Pequaket tribe. He took up arms against John Chamberlain, the slayer of Paugus, the great chief, and he pursued him over the valleys from Winnepesaukee to Ossipee Falls. The pale-face leaped the falls,—the very spot is pointed out to-day,—but the Indian fell in his haste, and perished in the foaming waters,—and his ghost has haunted the place ever since. . . . white sprays of the restless waters, mist of dreams.

* * * * *

The shadows round the inland sea
Are deepening into night;
Slow up the slopes of Ossipee
They chase the lessening light.
Tired of the long day's blinding heat,
I rest my languid eye,
Lake of the Hills! where, cool and sweet
Thy sunset waters lie!

Along the sky, in wavy lines,
O'er isle and reach and bay,
Green-belted with eternal pines,
The mountains stretch away.
Below, the maple masses sleep
Where shore with water blends,
While midway on the tranquil deep
The evening light descends.

So seemed it when yon hill's red crown,
Of old, the Indian trod,
And, through the sunset air, looked down
Upon the Smile of God. . . .

—From *The Lakeside*.

* * *

II. ASQUAM

*"Before me, stretched for glistening miles,
Lay mountain-girdled Squam;
Like green-winged birds, the leafy isles
Upon its bosom swam."*

And, glimmering through the sun-haze warm,
Far as the eye could roam,
Dark billows of an earthquake storm
Beflecked with clouds like foam,
Their vales in misty shadow deep,
Their rugged peaks in shine,
I saw the mountain ranges sweep
The horizon's northern line.

There towered Chocorua's peak; and west,
Moosehillock's woods were seen,
With many a nameless slide-scarred crest
And pine-dark gorge between.
Beyond them, like a sun-rimmed cloud,
The great Notch mountains shone,
Watched over by the solemn-browed
And awful face of stone!

—From *The Hill-Top*.

The little lake Asquam, meaning the beautiful-surrounded-by-water-place, is very fair. Like most inland waters it is crystal clear, reflecting minutely every change and tinge of color of the clouds and trees and sky. It is only two miles beyond Sandwich on the road under the red oaks and maples of Red Hill to Centre Harbor. It is not big, like Winnepesaukee, but it is even more charming. The graceful curves of its shore lines, the miniature islands rocking on its waters, and the mists arising at dawn and evening take possession of every sense.

The Indian myth that lies sleeping on the waters' breast wakes only in a fierce thunder storm at night, when the curse of old Wamego flashes in the lightning; the moaning of Suneta haunts the valley for miles around, and the love song of Anonis yearns far in

the lonely hills. Long ago, the legend says, an old Indian chief, the ugly Wamego, whose squaw had died, lived on the shores of 'Squam. Suneta, the daughter of a neighboring chief, was sold to him by her father, although she was pledged to Anonis, a brave of her own tribe. The marriage feast with the ugly chief was celebrated. Before many moons had passed, however, when one night the old Wamego lay sleeping heavily, Suneta heard her lover's voice:

“Come! The night is dark and stormy,
My canoe is on the lake.
My beloved! I cannot live without you.
You are mine!
Death awaits me tonight if I bear you not
away in mine arms!”

Suneta sprang to him and they fled through the shadows. Wamego awoke, followed them and caught them. With his tomahawk he killed Anonis, and lifting up his voice over the fainting Suneta, cried, “May fire blast her! Let the Manitou make of her an example to coming time!” A flash of lightning and a savage growl of thunder replied to his words. The body of Suneta was turned to stone,—circle of the sighing

wind, miserere,—the ever living Francesca and Paoli! To-day all the people who come to Asquam may look upon the rock so strangely carven in a woman's form, sad, disconsolate on the far side of the lake: "*Mat wonck kunna-monee!*" it is said. And the song of the Indian women in *The Bridal of Pennacook* is remembered.

The Dark eye has left us,
 The Spring-bird has flown;
 On the pathway of spirits
 She wanders alone.
 The song of the wood-dove has died on our shore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We hear it no more!

O dark water Spirit!
 We cast on thy wave
 These furs which may never
 Hang over her grave;
 Bear down to the lost one the robes that she wore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We see her no more!

Of the strange land she walks in
 No Powah has told:
 It may burn with the sunshine,
 Or freeze with the cold.
 Let us give to our lost one the robes that she wore:
Mat wonck kunna-monee! We see her no more!

* * * * *

O mighty Sowanna!
 Thy gateways unfold,

From thy wigwam of sunset
Lift curtains of gold!
Take home the poor Spirit whose journey is o'er:
Mat wonck kunna-monce! We see her no more!

—From *The Bridal of Pennacook*.

* * *

III. CHOCORUA

*"Part thy blue lips, Northern Lake!
Moss-grown rocks your silence break!
Tell the tale thou ancient tree!
Thou, too, slide-worn Ossipee!
Speak and tell us how and when
Lived and died this King of men!"*

The mountain of all mountains around Sandwich is Chocorua, the Prophet's Tomb. It is known far and wide beyond any other of the White Hills, save Mount Washington alone, and it is loved far more than any other. Even children may climb Chocorua, and its story is a tale told at the New England firesides in the long winter, even as the story of the Black Douglas stirred the Scottish hearts of long ago. Chocorua was a chief of the Ossipee tribe. He was afraid of nothing. He fought in many battles with the white men to keep the home and the

hunting ground of his people. But the settlers and the soldiers were too strong for him. The Ossipee tribe was driven, foot by foot, over the border into Canada. Chocorua and a handful of braves remained. They established their stronghold on a nameless mountain where roamed the bears and the deer. The colony of Massachusetts offered many pounds of silver for scalps of the Indians. Thus, for blood money, one by one, Chocorua's men were killed. The long winter came and Chocorua was left alone. For many months no white man dared go near the nameless mountain for very dread. But when the spring awoke and the white ramparts of snow fell from Chocorua's fort, every pass into the forest there was guarded and a hundred men assembled to hunt down the fierce chieftain. He retreated farther and farther up the mountain, pressed on by his enemies, until at last he reached the peak, that sharp tower rock, like a leaning battlement in the sky. His arrows were gone; death or capture was before him. With folded arms he stood silent on the peak. A bullet whistled by him. Then he lifted up his voice in a prophecy of woe to

the white man's land, of sickness to the cattle, of death to the young men. He sang the cry of the abandonment of the land, then he plunged into the dark sea of mist and pines three thousand feet below. The mountain was named his brave name. It is graven there forevermore.

A huge gray bowlder lies to-day under a giant birch not far from the Half-Way House of Chocorua:

And there the fallen chief is laid,
In tasselled garb of skins arrayed,
And girded with his wampum-braid.

* * * * *

'Tis done: the roots are backward sent,
The beechen-tree stands up unbent,
The Indian's fitting monument!

When of that sleeper's broken race
Their green and pleasant dwelling-place,
Which knew them once, retains no trace;

O, long may sunset's light be shed
As now upon that beech's head,
A green memorial of the dead!

There shall his fitting requiem be,
In northern winds, that, cold and free,
Howl nightly in that funeral tree.

* * * * *

O peeled and hunted and reviled,
Sleep on, dark tenant of the wild!
Great Nature owns her simple child!

—From *Funeral Tree of the Sokokis*.

“Yes,—dees be ze place where Shocoruay be buried,” says old “Dutch” Liberty, keeper of the Half-Way House, “dees be ze place!” Liberty is a French-Canadian by birth but he has been in New Hampshire beyond folks’ counting, and by Carroll County logic, since it be not English that he speaks, he must be a Dutchman. He is at any rate an industrious toll gatherer. He knows by natural instinct every foot of the ground Chocorua trod, and even as the guides of Holyrood, he too can point out drops of blood along the trail and can speak the very words of Chocorua’s curse.

“Zen ze cattle zey die by one, by two, by ze hunder,—all from Shocoruay’s curse.” But Mrs. Liberty shakes her head mildly, “That be, so I hear, on account of too much lime in the water. They gave the cattle soapsuds an’ they was cured. But when I merried Liberty an’ come up here on the mountain ter live, scarce a body would plant foot on Shocoruay. That be thirty

years ago come next August, an' here we be still."

Mrs. Liberty is of Quaker blood and Quaker gentleness. Her eyes are blue, and her hair a soft, waving white. Her face is fine and in spite of her sixty odd years, fresh and rosy in coloring, and her bearing stately and erect. On sunny afternoons she sits for hours on the steps of the Half-Way House, knitting little presents for her friends, the visitors to Chocorua. She brings them glasses of mountain water and looks to their comfort in many ways.

The Half-Way House is just a rough three-roomed shack made of pine boards. Red calico curtains are tacked across the windows and scarlet geraniums in old tomato cans bloom on the pine window sills. Mountain air and the scent of the balsam fir fill the bare, clean, little rooms. From the front door the hill descends, past the corral for the tourists' teams, far down into the white birch belt. The incline is steep from the rear of Half-Way House. A silver trout stream tumbles down the hill as though it were going to run straight into the back door of the little house, but it takes a sharp

turn to the right just where the Liberty trail begins.

“Be you goin’ ter climb Shocoruay to-day?” Mrs. Liberty asks. “It be blowing strong on the peak to-day, but there’s fifteen gone before ye. But they ain’t done fixin’ the teams yet so you kin set awhile with me. Be I lonely? Wa’al yes, there aint never a soul comes near Shocoruay long in the winter, an’ me an’ Liberty, we jest sets here, an’ does our chores, an’ sets here. I say to myself ‘God hev set me down here on Shocoruay, an’ here to stay;’ an’ I prays ter Him an’ takes my lot. T’aint so hard when you come to think. We got potatoes yonder an’ flour in the shack, an’ bacon enough ter last, an’ thar be plenty of wood for fire, an’ t’aint so cold about here as ’tis in other places. It be cold enough though, an’ never a livin’ body; but along about Spring, though, all that’s changed, an’ friends begin ter come, an’ keep a comin’ till October sets in. I’d rather be here than on the farm. Sometimes me an’ Liberty we shets up the Half-Way House an’ goes to the farm, but it is about the same wherever we goes. Liberty an’ me made

the trail up Shocoruay,—yes, there be other trails, but they be full of harricanes. It keeps Liberty an' me workin' ter keep the trail in shape, an' this be the only one folks travel on much. The folks come from all parts—all over the world ter see Shocoruay. There be one old lady my age gone up there to-day—there be a good many old ladies hev climbed Shocoruay. You'll take notice of the one gone up to-day maybe. She has on spectacles an' wears a cape with a red plaid lining—I reckon you'll see her. Then there's some comes from Boston every summer an' New York. Everybody knows about Shocoruay, though I can't say as I see much ter it—Shocoruay be Shocoruay."

In all the Sandwich region so stirring with melodies of clouds and birds, children, flowers and pines, and lakes and hills, there is no chord more majestic, more sublime than this,—Chocorua! At first tenderly, as though to music in minor key, in piercing sweet—the young trail leaves the glowing stream beyond the Half-Way House, and steps into the fast vanishing zone of the white birches. Embraced by the pale, slender arms of those fairy trees, shadowed

in long arches of green leaves, it lingers pleasantly—and sadly—for a mile or more. Then it dips low down into a stony hollow, wet underfoot for a space, then mounts sharply up with sturdy strength into the black belt of the pines. Streams of water, myriads of them, spring from the mysterious rocks, and dance down the steep descent like water sprites. Like slender white threads they curve down under the traveler's feet and wind off into the deep forest—magic ways to Fair Rosamond. Enchanters appear in the shape of wonderful vistas, now far ahead or far back or to right or left, to lure the pilgrim off the trail. But Chocorua's summit is on ahead—the donjon tower—and a view of the mighty keep itself, Mount Washington, and all the walls and battlements and towers and turrets of the great castled land. Off to the south the vast moat—waters of Winnepesaukee—will glow; again, in the heart of the valley, Sandwich Village and all her little sister towns will be seen in their quiet sleep, while far off, miles beyond the hundred lakes, far across the country a long pale line will stretch—the coast of Maine dim in the mist of the sea.

Though the promise is fair and rich, the hillside is a wonderful thing—and hard to leave. It is a dreamer, savage and poetical—voice of the dying Moses murmuring low, precious things to the everlasting hills.

The way grows steep and bare. The pines are dwarfs, the rocks are giants. The earth begins to recede; the promise is about to be fulfilled. The regions of the sky are here. With a very trumpet's blast, the wild wind charges down, armored in black rocks, with boughs of the leaning pines his lance and battle axe, spray of the green pine his bright pennon—over all, white plumage of the clouds—laugh of Die Walkure.

The joust is on—the tournament of rocks and wind and sky.

Laissez aller!

A valiant step upward—a shouting in the very air—behold the peak, Chocorua!

[THE END]



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